



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

AN INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSES OF STUDENT  
DELINQUENCY  
REPORT OF THE SURVEY COMMITTEE OF THE SCHOOL-  
MASTERS' CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS<sup>1</sup>

---

I. INTRODUCTORY

---

W. W. HOBBS  
North High School, Minneapolis

---

The Minneapolis Schoolmasters' Club at its meeting of October 4, 1911, appointed a committee to investigate the causes of student delinquency, or, in other words, the causes of *failure of a pupil to pass in three of the four regular subjects at the end of the first semester of the current school year, ending January 26, 1912*, and thus of failure to be promoted. From a discussion following an introduction to the subject by the secretary, it was considered best to organize the committee under the supervision of a general chairman, who in turn chose three subchairmen, each to lead a small group of investigators. The three topics of inquiry chosen were: "Home Conditions," "Amusements and Employment," "Corrective and Preventive Agencies," together with general questions as to the student's status within the school. The three subchairmen together prepared a questionnaire which, with the approval of the committee and the superintendent of schools, was sent to five high schools

<sup>1</sup> The composition of the committee is as follows: W. W. Hobbs, principal North High School, chairman; Subcommittee on Home and Physical Conditions and Reading Habits: E. Dudley Parsons (English), West High School, chairman; Byron T. Emerson (chemistry), Central High School; Charles Huff (geography), West High School; E. G. Pennell (commercial), East High School; E. J. Hardaker, principal Jackson School; Subcommittee on Amusements and Employment: D. H. Holbrook (history), East High School, chairman; Malcolm Aldrich, principal Calhoun School; Orrin Ringwalt (manual training), North High School; Charles Austin (mathematics), Central High School; Subcommittee on Corrective and Preventive Agencies and what they are accomplishing: W. H. Shephard (history), North High School, chairman; C. O. Kloepper (German), West High School; R. J. Schultz (German), South High School; W. A. Westerson (commercial), South High School; J. E. Vance, principal Hawthorne School.

and ten grade schools, including thus "all sorts and conditions" of pupils within its scope. During the year approximately 815 pupils from the fifth to the eighth grades, inclusive, failed of promotion during the semester ending January 26, 1912, out of a total of 16,202 enrolled; and for the same period, 606 high-school pupils out of a total of 5,948 failed in two or more subjects, and were therefore not promoted. The questions to which answers were received from 407 pupils were as follows:

REPORT TO SURVEY COMMITTEE OF SCHOOLMASTERS'  
CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS

QUESTIONNAIRE

THE STUDENT:

- Name?.....Age?.....
1. Grade?.....Number of high-school credits? .....
  2. Age at entrance to First Grade?.....Where did retardation begin?.....
  3. What are the pupil's difficult subjects?.....
  4. How many schools has he attended and where?.....
  5. Regularity of attendance?.....
  6. Causes of prolonged absence?.....
  7. Average time spent in preparation of lessons, outside of school hours?.....
  8. Number of high-school subjects he is now taking?.....
  9. Number of times he has taken the same subject because of failure?.....
  10. Physical condition?.....

HOME CONDITIONS:

11. How many mornings in the week does his family eat breakfast together?.....
12. How many times a week does his family eat evening meal together?.....
13. What books has pupil read since June, 1911?.....
14. What magazines are taken in his home?.....
15. Is there any reading aloud by any member of family to the others?.....
16. How many evenings in a week does his father attend meetings of organizations such as church, club, lodge, and union?.....
17. How many evenings or afternoons in a week does his mother attend such meetings?.....
18. How many evenings in a week are both away?.....How many entire evenings a week is pupil at home?.....
19. How often is company entertained evenings?.....
20. Does he have a quiet place in which to study?.....Where?.....
21. Does he have any home tasks, and how long each day employed in such work?.....
22. Does he drink?.....Does he smoke?.....

## AMUSEMENTS:

23. How often does he go to the moving-picture show?.....  
To vaudeville?.....
24. To regular theater?..... Which does he like best?.....
25. How often does he go to parties?.....
26. How often does he visit evenings or remain with friends over night?.....
27. Does he play on athletic team?..... To what extent?.....
28. What physical exercise does he have?.....

## EMPLOYMENT:

29. Does he earn any money outside of school hours?..... At what work?.....
30. What hours, and days each week?.....
31. Give details of former employment, down to fifth grade?.....
32. For what subjects has student shown special liking?.....
33. What vocation does he prefer, or look forward to?.....

## CORRECTIVE AND PREVENTIVE AGENCIES:

34. Has student at any time come under restraint or direction of any one or more of the following institutions? Give circumstances.....
- a) Humane Society..... f) Night Schools.....
- b) Juvenile Court..... g) Juvenile Protective League.....
- c) Detention Home..... h) Settlement Houses.....
- d) Truant or Ungraded School..... i) Ungraded Teachers.....
- e) Vacation Schools.....
35. If on probation, give results on scholarship and deportment.....

## TO THE TEACHER:

36. Add any information that you think is not covered by these questions,

Definition: For the purpose of this investigation, a "delinquent" is a pupil who fails of promotion *this term*, including any who have left during the term because of inability to do the work.

First let us consider the pupil as he appears on the school records. The largest percentage of failures in proportion to the total enrolment for grade pupils was in the seventh grade—7 per cent; the smallest—in the eighth—2.4 per cent. The fifth grade shows 5 per cent, the sixth  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. While, from conditions which make this city an ideal one in many respects, these percentages are not very startling, yet they make a problem well worthy of investigation. These proportions are further emphasized by the following figures of those who answered our questions: seventh grade 33 per cent, eighth 12 per cent, fifth 27 per cent, sixth 28

per cent. That the largest number is in the seventh may be explained by the age of the child in that grade and the beginning of his real difficulties attending study and application. It appears that little responsibility outside of school is required of the pupil before the seventh grade is reached, and then that there is not that definite responsibility which might lead to better preparation for the work in high school.

For the high-school students the percentage of failures on the part of students reporting is as follows: A<sub>12</sub>, 1 per cent; B<sub>12</sub>, 2 per cent; A<sub>11</sub>, 5 per cent; B<sub>11</sub>, 13 per cent; A<sub>10</sub>, 8 per cent; B<sub>10</sub>, 16 per cent; A<sub>9</sub>, 20 per cent; B<sub>9</sub>, 35 per cent. Of the total enrolment in the high schools during the semester, 15 per cent of the first-year pupils failed, 10 per cent of the second, 14 per cent of the third, and 10 per cent of the fourth. Again, although the situation in the high schools is worse than that in the grades, the figures are not startling. However, if we can reduce these percentages by getting at the root of the trouble, clearly our duty is to do it.

The question which comes next on our questionnaire had to do with the comparative difficulty of subjects. In the grades we find that arithmetic seems to be the great stumbling-block. The principal subjects stated in order of difficulty, the greatest appearing first, are as follows: arithmetic, grammar, English, history, language, and geography. Arithmetic appears to be very decidedly the most difficult; grammar a poor second, and English a very poor third. In the high school, the order of difficulty is as follows: algebra, English, language, geometry, and history. Very few mention science.

That regularity of attendance and continuance in one good school are first aids to efficient work has been axiomatic with educators. Of 380 pupils quizzed on the first point, 80 testify that they have been irregular in attendance. The following table is interesting:

Number of Schools Attended	Number of Pupils Replying
3.....	79
4.....	30
5.....	15
6.....	7
7.....	1

That is to say, 132 students have attended three or more different *schools* in Minneapolis. This table as to the different *systems* attended is no less enlightening:

Number of Systems	Number Replying
2.....	61
3.....	27
4.....	8
5.....	6

Thus, eliminating the number enrolled in two different systems, we have 41, or about 10 per cent of the total number in the inquiry, who have been enrolled in three or more systems. It may be pertinent to remark that while any school system, worthy of the name, keeps the work in its schools of the same general type, there are differences of method and associations that make even changes within the city often detrimental to a child. It is far more evident that shifting from town to town makes for retardation, so foreign is the tongue that the strange boy or girl hears in the new classroom. A move to co-ordinate the work of the various school systems would do much to prevent retardation and consequent waste.

The next topic is the average time spent in preparation of lessons outside of school. It appears from reports that those who failed in the grades devoted from one-half to one hour at home to their work. This is not startling, as those who passed probably did little more. But in the high school a different situation confronts us. If reports are to be believed, a large proportion of those who failed devoted two to four hours outside of school to their work, while only 12 per cent of the failures were content with one hour or less. I think it is settled in the minds of all, of experience, who have looked into this matter, especially principals who come into contact with all classes, that the largest proportion of failures is due to lack of effort. On the part of those who give enough time, the difficulty is due to lack of knowledge as to how to study and how to use their time to advantage. The remedy in the latter case, of course, is definite instruction to individuals and classes as to methods of study, particularly carefulness in giving out lessons and the assurance that pupils have a definite idea of what is required

before they begin their work. Little can be expected of pupils to whom the lesson is given as the class passes from the room, especially if it involves certain development and explanation where a proper foundation is to be laid.

Weak physical conditions is the last general topic assigned. In the grades we find from our best information that of the failures reported  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent were classed as weak physically, and in the high school about 7 per cent. The conditions involved in this class vary so greatly that it is not necessary to take the time to discuss them. This is, of course, the unfortunate group. For their condition, we are not responsible, primarily. We have a definite duty to see that they are brought under physical inspection. When we know how to present, in the proper way, the really necessary laws of hygiene, we shall remedy greater difficulties than now exist.

---

## II. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOME CONDITIONS

---

E. DUDLEY PARSONS  
West High School, Minneapolis

---

The Subcommittee on Home Conditions entered upon its task with more hope than its friends thought justifiable. To get definite answers to such personal questions as the committee believed ought to be asked was, these friends said, impossible, even if teachers, already worried by various investigations, would consent to make the inquiries. Then, after certain results had been obtained, what reasonably could be argued concerning the relation of these results to delinquency? Would not a similar inspection of "passing" students reveal nearly the same situation? Despite these suggestions of failure, however, the committee has pressed on in the faith that, if only it could give point to the wide generalizations evoked by constant observation and casual questioning of students, by presenting a few significant facts, some good might come of its efforts.

But these efforts have yielded perhaps more than the committee had a right to expect. In general, the criticism of home life that ministers, journalists, travelers, and other observers of our national

tendencies, are making is substantiated by this report. On some points, to be sure—such as the contention that many parents are habitually away from home—the committee cannot hold with these critics. But to the proposition that the home lacks seriousness of purpose, which it must get, if our nation is to increase in intellectual and moral stature, these findings add testimony.

First of all, that economic and social change in our life is tending to scatter the family and so hinder boys and girls from the thoughtful development that a family circle suggests, is a common saying. To test the truth of it, these questions were asked of delinquent students:

1. On how many mornings in a week does your family eat breakfast together?
2. How many times a week do they eat the evening meal together?
3. How many evenings in a week is your father away from home? On how many evenings or afternoons is your mother away? Both together?
4. On how many entire evenings in a week are you at home?
5. How often is company entertained in your home?

The following table shows how the 379 and 375 respectively who replied to the first two questions were distributed:

Days in Week	Breakfast	Evening Meal
0.....	96	41
1.....	55	8
2.....	16	8
3.....	15	5
4.....	14	4
5.....	6	9
6.....	12	30
7.....	165	270
Totals.....	379	375

It will be seen that approximately 50 per cent of these families eat together only half the breakfasts in a week, that 16 per cent are together but once and 26 per cent (largely families of traveling men) are never associated at the morning meal. In many of these homes, children, even those who should report at school almost as early as their elders report at the shop, office, or store, are permitted to sleep late, and then to snatch scraps of food instead of



being persuaded to sit soberly with their parents at the table. Thus they not only miss good training in punctuality, in formal conversation, and in deliberation, but they actually injure their health besides. Neither is to be lightly taken that 15 per cent of the families enumerated are together for less than half the evening meals in a week, and that 12 per cent, for reasons good or bad, never enjoy this communion, once believed to be the right of every family, and certainly needed more in this busy world than it was in the quieter one of our fathers. For obvious reasons there was no account taken of the mid-day meals: those families that meet at noon are very few indeed. The committee thinks that in this tendency to separation at meal time is a danger that parents would do well to appreciate at its full cost.

To the complaint that fathers and mothers are away from their homes a great deal, the following compilation of replies concerning 217 fathers and 348 mothers lends little encouragement.

No. Evenings in Week	Fathers Out	Mothers Out	Both Out
0.....	104	158	169
1.....	124	116	88
2.....	57	50	36
3.....	7	...	...
More.....	25	24	12
Totals.....	317	348	305

Surely the fact that only 8 per cent of the mothers and 10 per cent of the fathers are absent from home more than two evenings or afternoons (in cases of mothers) a week, while 40 per cent of the fathers and 46 per cent of the mothers are absent but once a week, and 46 per cent of the fathers and 43 per cent of the mothers are never away, or so seldom that it is useless to count the outings, need not call for diatribe from either pulpit, platform, or press. The committee grants, however, that these few erring parents ought to be saved themselves first: then perhaps they can expect their children to be serene students.

The committee is surprised to find such a scattering of 380 pupils as this table shows:

Evenings the Pupil Is at Home	Pupils
0.....	14
1.....	15
2.....	25
3.....	45
4.....	56
5.....	79
6.....	55
7.....	91
Total.....	380

Evidently these children believe that they can go home when there is no place easier to reach. It can be seen that 46 per cent of them confess that they are "out" the larger share of the evenings in a week; only 54 per cent that they have the stay-at-home habit. What other reason for the delinquency of the 14 who are never at home during the evening or of the 15 who visit their parents but once a week is to be looked for? And what can be said of the discipline of the parents who permit this kind of thing?

This felony is compounded by the entertainment of "company" who swarm the students in their "quiet hours." Again the table tells the tale:

Company never entertained in.....	52 families
Company entertained once a week in.....	152 families
Company entertained twice a week in.....	59 families
Company entertained thrice a week in.....	39 families
Company entertained oftener in .....	19 families
Total.....	321 families

Here we have 50 per cent of the number answering who see company once a week, regularly if not formally, 20 per cent, twice, and 12 per cent, three times. It is hard for a lively, young animal to "kick against the pricks" and go away by himself to devour geometry or history while just beyond his paddock are Elysian fields of song and laughter.

That so many students have quiet rooms in which to study is another matter of surprise to the committee, the members of which remember their own meager accommodations. But Minneapolis parents are very careful to save their children from struggles which

they themselves were forced to make. In response to a query as to whether they have a quiet place to study, 369 of 427 said "Yes"; and in reply to the question "Where?" artfully put, the committee thought, to catch those who might misconceive the true nature of quietude, of 346, 236 say that they have their own rooms. Is it not possible to lay the flattery to heart that we are to have studious boys and girls merely because we have given them study-rooms? Is the case of the mother who wondered why, when she went to visit her athletic son in his apartments, she so often found him either asleep or conning some matter extraneous to his lesson, so rare?

Another division of its task has afforded the committee a glimpse of these homes. That is the subject of reading. There was no surprise awaiting it there; for its members have not read the advertisements of a certain Philadelphia publishing house without knowing that the homes of America are being buried in the product of that house. Who can see the bales of newspapers shipped into every block in the city and into every hamlet in the state, and expect simple unguided youth to sit poring over biography, the "classic novels," or even the better class of periodicals? All periodicals the committee, rather arbitrarily, it is true, divides into four classes: first, those filled with cheap stories; second, those devoted chiefly to the home—women's journals, young peoples' magazines, and a few, only a few, religious papers; third, those devoted chiefly to reform, that "feature" special industrial and social activities; and fourth, those that discuss current history in a more or less critical manner, and encourage the more serious forms of fiction and exposition. The following table is interesting if not reassuring:

Families who take no periodicals. . . . .	72
Number of Class 1 periodicals taken. . . . .	91
Number of Class 2 periodicals taken. . . . .	402
Number of Class 3 periodicals taken. . . . .	94
Number of Class 4 periodicals taken. . . . .	167

This is to say that 20 per cent of these families apparently find the newspaper all-sufficient for regular mental diet. Of those weeklies and monthlies that are subscribed for, 11 per cent are cheap story magazines, a like percentage, the so-called "muck-

rakers," 19 per cent the higher-priced and generally deeper-toned periodicals; while 50 per cent are home journals. From this tabulation, the committee believes that it may justly conclude that although these families who read magazines do not incline to the worst, they are not disposed to furnish their young people with much food for thought.

Book reading is, of course, stimulated by the school—especially by the high school which demands a certain amount of collateral reading of each student in each term. In this way even delinquents in English get something of permanent worth. It is sufficient to turn to the public-library records to discover the kind of books that Minneapolis is reading. Those records give 70 per cent of fiction to 1 per cent of biography, and the librarians testify that the fiction is principally the lightest that the board allows on the shelves. We may, however, inform ourselves as to the *amount* read by delinquent students since June, 1911, from this table:

Number of Books	Number of Students Replying
None.....	79
5 or less.....	189
More than 5, and less than 10.....	75
More than 10.....	32
Total.....	375

Hence it is clear that 20 per cent read no books, outside of school, 50 per cent less than 5, 20 per cent more than 5, but less than 10, and only 10 per cent more than 10. In general, these books correspond in character to the public librarian's testimony; but here and there are notable exceptions of students who have failed in the routine school work, for the sake of putting time on novels to which the teachers have introduced them.

The committee finds that the custom of reading aloud by one member of the family, father or mother or older child, to the group no longer holds the place it used to hold. Hastily eaten meals followed by the rush to work or school or the hurry to dress for the evening's engagements do not permit the communal study of a poem or discussion of a sermon or friendly dispute over politics that was wont to make the family circle a lyceum of purpose and force.

Of 377 families accounted for in this inquiry, only 129 appear to have the custom of reading aloud. In other words, 60 per cent of these children know nothing of the advantage for thought training and general information that this custom gives.

The reading habit is generally affected by either or both of the drinking and smoking habits. Previous observation had not led the committee to expect to find much evidence of a liquor habit among students even of the high school. It had been confident, however, that an extensive use of tobacco would be revealed by its inquiries. This habit many investigators have proved beyond a doubt injurious to study. Of the 228 who answered the question regarding the use of liquor, only 9 confessed to drinking regularly; of 246, only 48 to smoking regularly. Whether these last figures be correct or not, the percentage is large enough to enter into any discussion as to the causes of delinquency. A thoroughgoing campaign should be waged to prevent boys from using tobacco in any form.

Finally, the committee has felt that a lack of a home task—something for which the boy or girl should be held accountable during a certain definite time of each day—is a large factor in the problem of his or her delinquency—in the failure of this boy or girl to undertake his or her *school task* and carry it through to the end. With this idea firmly in mind, the committee asked both whether there was a task and how long it took to perform it. The answers are very interesting—and once more, very surprising: 225 say that they have such tasks, and 92 that they have nothing to do at all. But of those who work about the house, 154 are employed but half an hour each day, and only 39 more than an hour. One boy said that he had to feed the dog every day, and a girl admitted that her regular job was to pay the hired maid once a week. It is clear that for the old woodpile no fitting substitute has been found. To be sure, the modern house seems to be the robber; but although it has taken away the chance to hew wood and draw water, it has provided a warm light basement suitable for a workshop in which the skill learned in the manual-training shop can be applied to the repair and even the manufacture of furniture, the pride of any family to exhibit. In this day of business efficiency

it offers, too, a fine opportunity to the commercially inclined student. What household would not be better for a more careful accounting of its expenditures? And in this time of hustle, it invites someone to be the reader to the family—someone who may as well be a schoolboy or -girl as the head of the family. What is needed, the committee thinks, is not a return to the impossible conditions but an adjustment to those of modern life.

To put its finger upon *the* cause of student delinquency the committee does not venture. It feels that the fickle business world with its ever-increasing demands is the prime factor in the present unrest of mind and spirit, that the home is the victim of this unrest, and that hence it does not furnish youth disciplined faithfully and carefully to follow instruction to the place where initiative takes up the burden of life and guides life not only to support itself with food, but to sustain itself with culture which our fathers who brought forth this nation understood so well. This sense of responsibility, inspired by family union, strengthened by habits of self-denial and by reflection that cometh not of comic supplements and light reading, and further developed by the practice of carrying burdens day after day, the committee feels is lacking in many Minneapolis homes—a statement which its investigations, it believes, entitle it to make.

---

### III. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON AMUSEMENTS AND EMPLOYMENT

---

D. H. HOLBROOK  
East High School, Minneapolis

---

Your Committee on Amusements and Employment has confined its investigation to a limited field, and presents statistics suggesting conclusions on the following points:

1. Average frequency of attendance at places of amusement.
2. Extent to which this may be a contributing cause of delinquency.
3. Character of amusements.
4. Extent to which outside employment is a contributing cause.

In answer to the questions, How often do you attend the moving-picture show, the vaudeville, the regular theater, parties, visit

evenings and remain with friends over night? the following figures were gathered:

TABLE I  
FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE

Frequency	Picture Shows	Vaudeville	Parties	Visiting	Theater	Total
Twice a week.....	44	8	3	21	4	80
Weekly.....	62	69	27	30	33	221
Bi-weekly.....	31	27	24	9	34	125
Monthly.....	75	87	118	32	80	392
	212	191	172	92	151	818

In order to show the average frequency for the entire 400, the figures should be reduced to a common basis. By multiplying the "twice a week" total by 8, the "weekly" by 4, the "bi-weekly" by 2, and adding these to the "monthly" total, it will be found that a grand total of 2,166 occasions were devoted to idle amusements each month by these 400 delinquents, an average of oftener than once a week.

Realizing that this average was not evenly distributed, that a large number were delinquent from other causes, and therefore that some must be attending outside attractions with considerable regularity, the committee made a study of the habits of each of the 400 and prepared the following table:

TABLE II  
HABITS OF EACH INDIVIDUAL

Apparently not away from home at all.....	136	33 per cent
Not oftener than once a week.....	103	25
Not oftener than twice a week.....	83	20
Not oftener than thrice a week.....	49	12
Not oftener than four times a week.....	22	6
Nearly every afternoon or evening.....	14	4
	407	100

It will be observed that this table supplements the findings of the Committee on Home Conditions, and that the fourteen who confessed that they were never at home are accounted for—this without collusion between the committees. The committee submits that when 42 per cent of all delinquents (62 per cent of those going

outside the home at all for amusement) are away from home and school as often as two afternoons or evenings a week in pursuit of whatever recreation their whim or pocket-book may dictate, certainly one of the causes of delinquency is an overindulgence in idle amusement. As to the character of these amusements the committee has no facts to offer. It was felt that the work of censoring places of amusement and estimating their educational values is a task by itself, and that the facts above stated would be more forceful if they suggested to the community the need of future careful investigation by more expert and competent authorities than if they were obscured by such incomplete data as we might present at this time.

It will be noticed, however, in Table I, that 44 (10 per cent of the 400) say they are accustomed to spend two afternoons or evenings at the picture shows; and that of the 212 who go there at any time, 106, or 50 per cent, attend as often as once a week. Yet the preferences expressed in answer to the question: "Which do you like best?" shows that only 24 prefer the picture show, 92 the vaudeville, and 142 the regular theater, while 149 have no choice. It would seem to your committee that the reason so many are wasting their time in this manner is not that they like it, but that they can afford it, and that the need is certain and the demand great for some "social machinery" to provide the means for realizing the ideals expressed in this choice of amusements. Common-sense does not dictate, nor do overcrowded courses permit, nor would overworked teachers welcome, an addition of this nature to the routine work of the school; but the dark, vacant school buildings with their many well-equipped auditoriums and gymnasiums stand as a constant reproach to our tardiness as a community in providing cheap, wholesome amusement for all our boys and girls together with their fathers and mothers. When the authorities shall see their way clear to adopt an aggressive policy in leading the people to use their school buildings for educational and recreational purposes to the fullest extent, a long step will have been taken toward providing supervised and wholesome amusement for normal as well as delinquent pupils.

In this connection it should be stated that an investigation



would undoubtedly show that the conditions tabulated for these delinquent pupils are not exceptional, but are normal for all pupils. A comparison of our figures with those gathered last year by Mrs. Perry Starkweather, assistant commissioner of labor, shows that the percentage of all children attending picture shows is about the same as the above percentage for delinquents. If too frequent attendance on picture shows is a cause of delinquency, surely an equally frequent attendance by all pupils must be a serious interference with the best results.

In the matter of employment the following figures are suggestive:

TABLE III  
EMPLOYED AT WORK OTHER THAN HOME TASKS

Afternoons.....	97	Carrying papers.....	44
Evenings.....	2	Clerks.....	34
All night.....	1	Delivery boys.....	24
Saturdays.....	21	Trades.....	19
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	121		121

It is evident from the foregoing that the 100, or 25 per cent of the 400, who work several hours every day point to another cause of failure to do normal school work. But the committee was in doubt what importance to attach to this apparent cause, in view of the well-known fact that we have many boys who are earning their entire expenses and doing very creditable class work. With this in mind the cases were studied to see if this were as large a factor as it seemed. It was found that 54 of the 100 were numbered among those who attended amusements as often as once a week. It would seem therefore that their outside work was only one factor in half the cases.

The committee was interested in knowing the ambitions and aspirations that were in the minds of the 400, and were surprised to learn that 38 wished to be business men, 48 to work at a trade, and 106 to follow a profession; 226 expressed no choice, an entirely likely percentage considering the ages. It was not without point to discover that the favorite choice of the 106 failures in school, who think they are preparing for a profession, is teaching.

Only 15 took an active interest in athletics. In answer to

the question: "What physical exercise does he have?" 145 said they had sufficient, 78 had some, and 83 none. The data on this point were so indefinite, however, that no very specific information was secured.

In conclusion the committee finds that:

1. The delinquent pupils are spending more than one afternoon or evening away from home in unsupervised recreation.
2. Sixty-two per cent of those seeking amusement outside the home are going twice a week or oftener.
3. A further investigation of the character of amusement now afforded should be made; the further development of the school building as a social center is advisable.

---

#### IV. CORRECTIVE AND PREVENTIVE AGENCIES

---

W. H. SHEPHARD  
North High School, Minneapolis

---

This subcommittee has had for its more immediate field such agencies as the Juvenile Court, the Truant or Ungraded School, the Boys' Detention Home, vacation schools, and the ungraded teacher. It may be cause for gratulation that the returns from these inquiries were so meager. It has been apparent in many cases, where replies were made, that the relation of cause and effect could hardly be discovered or deduced. Since it is true, however, that such institutions as the Court, the Ungraded School, and the Boys' Detention Home are constantly in touch with and of service to the public schools, it may be wise to refer to their particular activities.

Altogether in ten cases reported to us—eight grade pupils and two high-school students—has the Juvenile Court been directly a factor and helpful in improving the deportment, if not the scholarship, of most of them. In two cases home conditions were unmistakably bad, through lack of moral restraint. Three of the boys have been under each of the following agencies: Juvenile Court, Truant School, and ungraded teacher. One high-school student, as naïvely expressed by himself, was taken by a mistake for "the

wrong noise-maker"; the other, twice in court, had a normal school record. A kleptomaniac tendency is indicated in one; another boy, with plenty of work to do at home, was up for "stealing bicycles." In general, court experience is not shown to have a marked effect upon scholarship.

From Miss Kate Finkle's<sup>1</sup> study of Juvenile Court cases, covering a period of two years, 1908-10, a number of conclusions are here given reflecting upon home conditions. Of contributing causes behind offenses, the most significant is deficiency in the home, where almost without exception lies the fault. The "weak homes," those that fail sufficiently to protect the child, are:

1. Abnormal in construction of family life.
2. Abnormal or subnormal in parental control.

Miss Finkle further divides the abnormal home into the following classes:

a) The deficient home, in which one or both parents are dead, insane, or divorced.

b) The "half home," in which both parents work, or where the father is absent from town a large part of the time.

c) The home where poverty crowds.

d) The vicious home, in which there is drink, immorality, or where the parents have served or are serving workhouse sentences.

In reference to the second class, the divisions are as follows:

a) The home where parental control is weak, through lack of will-power.

b) The home where parents are too indulgent.

"Out of the 1,070 cases, 126, in which the family construction was perfect, were dismissed after trial; 416 of the families or 39 per cent of the total were not normally constituted"; that is, either the father or mother, or both, had died or were insane, or the parents were divorced or separated. In 63 families there was drunkenness to excess on part of either or both parents. In 31 families, the parents were either mentally or physically disabled. Thriftlessness and immorality show in many of these cases. The total of the foregoing families, abnormal in construction, gives 51 per cent.

<sup>1</sup> Special probation officer, Hennepin County, Juvenile Court.

In the remaining 49 per cent of the 1,070 families, initial delinquency is attributed to "lack of proper control or too great indulgence on the part of the parents." In 24 per cent of the families so considered, "one or both of the parents frankly admit that their child is beyond home control," an admission made not only by dwellers on the "flats," but by those living on the parkways and boulevards. The observations of the special officer as to inadequate playgrounds and lack of small parks, where most needed, the need of a "school of training for parents," the lack of enforcement of anti-cigarette laws and curfew ordinances, are pertinent to the whole problem of proper control. This survey demonstrates at least one thing, as indicated elsewhere: that in the home are the chief issues and the greatest burden of the problem's solution. And yet the statement in a recent *Bulletin of Municipal Statistics*, issued by the Minneapolis City Controller, to the effect that 70 per cent of the total population of 301,000 are living in homes, rather than in hotels and apartment buildings, indicates rather an exceptional and favorable condition, as cities go, for normal family life.

The Detention Home<sup>1</sup> is located 14 miles from the city on 92 acres of land, an excellent farm home, carefully and ably supervised. To it delinquent and dependent boys are regularly committed by the Juvenile Court. It is organized on the family plan, with instruction in the third, fifth, and seventh grades; six months is the maximum term. In 1911, 85 boys were committed. January 1, 1912, 21 boys were on hand. It is significant that in 41 of the above cases, the parents were separated, or one or both dead; 52 of these boys were 14 and below in age. But 3 cases on our inquiry appear on its rolls, one a truant.

In the Ungraded School, two of the delinquents in this inquiry had been enrolled. In each case the home conditions were deplorable. This school tries to make a special study of each of its pupils, generally without "laying hands on." Most of the pupils are above the average in intelligence, many of them being "victims of environment," i.e., the conditions in the grades "where a tired

<sup>1</sup> Under joint direction of judges of District Court and Board of County Commissioners.

teacher, with nerves, has too many pupils." This school has more to do with very active boys who easily do their work, than with those to whom we refer as "delinquents." All told, there were 176 enrolled in 1911-12, and the number in attendance at one time ranged from 12 to 20, there for a period of one month.

The ungraded teacher, as she is called, is especially appointed to each building to help backward pupils of any grade. The returns show that 22 pupils have been under such supervision once each, one twice, one three times, and one four times. In half a dozen cases, sickness, apparently, was the predisposing cause. In two cases of high-school students the reason assigned was that their people had moved a great deal.

Eight high-school students testify to the necessity of attendance in the vacation schools, giving as the reasons too rapid growth, too little study, too much outside work, and trouble with mathematics.<sup>1</sup> Eighteen grade pupils report having attended such schools; of these, three have also had the assistance of the ungraded teacher several times. Very few of these appear abnormal in type.

The main conclusion of this committee is that, while few of the "failing" students appear to have come under the supervision or restraint of these corrective and preventive agencies, the data gathered reinforce the contention that our American homes too easily give over the task of teaching and discipline to the school and to the pupil himself.

<sup>1</sup> The Minneapolis vacation schools were held from July 8 to August 15 during the summer of 1912. According to the final report of F. H. Forssell, superintendent, the enrolment in the various departments, including manual training and domestic science, was 3,715. Of the 2,181 in the academic department there were 1,179 "retarded" pupils, and 986 were recommended for promotion.